

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-15, and 19-20 have been cancelled; claims 16-18 have been amended; and new claims 21-22 have been added. Claims 16-18 and 21-22 are now in the application.

New claim 21 comprises cancelled dependent claim 19 rewritten as new claim 21 to incorporate therein the subject matter of claim 19 as well as independent claim 16, the claim from which claim 19 directly depended. Claim 21, as now presented in this application, overcomes the prior rejection of claim 21 under 35 USC 112 in the parent application because of the prior use of the word "vias" without proper antecedent. The USPTO indicated, in the Final Rejection in the parent application, that if claim 21 was amended to overcome the Section 112 rejection it would be allowable. Independent claim 21, as well as dependent claims 17-18 which depend from claim 21, should, therefore, now be allowable

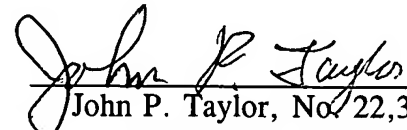
New claim 22 is patterned after independent claim 16. Claims 16 and 22 were rejected in the parent application under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Sukharev et al. U.S. Patent 6,114,259. Claims 16 and 22 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over You et al. U.S. Patent 6,235,453 B1. Both claims 16 and 22 now recite the directional beam of charged particles which comprises the oxidizing plasma as further characterized by the substantial absence of uncharged radicals.

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If the Examiner in charge of this case feels that there are any issues in this case which may be resolved by telephone, the Examiner is urged to call the undersigned attorney at the below listed telephone number which is in the Pacific Coast Time Zone.

Respectfully Submitted,


John P. Taylor, No. 22,369
Attorney for Applicants
Telephone No. (909) 699-7551

Mailing Address:

Sandeep Jaggi, Chief Intellectual Property Counsel
Intellectual Property Law Department
LSI Logic Corporation
Mail Stop D-106
1551 McCarthy Blvd.
Milpitas, CA 95035